

charged American consumers far more than anyone else in the world.

This bill today would allow the Secretary to negotiate for lower-cost prescription drugs. This is a commonsense solution that could have enormous cost savings for seniors and the government. The VA Administration already does this effectively; so does every other industrialized country in the world.

My own State of Maine has led the way in implementing this approach at the State level. I have introduced my America Rx bill based on Maine's approach in the past Congresses. I am so pleased that this bill today does that same thing, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

THE THREAT OF IRAN AND SYRIA

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the growing threat of Iran and Syria and their involvement in the current war in Iraq.

As President Bush pointed out in his speech Wednesday night, we live in difficult times and are facing types of enemies never seen before. These terrorists are bent on the destruction of Western Civilization. I am pleased the President acknowledged the threat of Iran and Syria and included monitoring the borders of Iraq as an essential part of the solution to the Iraq conflict.

Seventy percent of American casualties in Iraq come from IEDs provided by Iran. This must be dealt with divisively or we will continue to lose the brave men and women who are fighting a noble cause in the global war on terror.

In addition, intelligence estimates show that at least 32,000 people are being paid by Iran to interfere with American efforts in Iraq. It is clear we cannot win in Iraq without dealing with Iran. They are determined to dominate the Arabian peninsula with their radical and twisted version of Islam, and to defeat and humiliate the United States in our efforts to help Iraq build a strong and stable democracy to serve as a model in the Middle East.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

(Mr. GRIJALVA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I believe this Congress has a mandate from the voters to start bringing our troops home from Iraq. This is not an option that we can pursue at our leisure. This is a solemn obligation of absolute urgency.

As we speak, preparations are being made to send more of our Nation's sons and daughters to Iraq, with or without

our consent, and some are already there.

A recent headline in the Financial Times states our predicament: "Congress is helpless only out of choice." The Constitution gives this House, gives this body, if it chooses to exercise it, the power of the Federal purse. No signing statement or political calculation can erase this hard fact. And if we choose to deny that we do have this power, we do a disservice to our Constitution, our constituents, and this body.

The escalation in Iraq, as announced by the President the other night, will only deepen our involvement in this debacle.

Mr. Speaker, this war is a financial, strategic and moral disaster for this Nation. We need to bring this sad misadventure to an end and start bringing our troops home now.

The American people have clearly expressed their view on Iraq in the last election that policy has to be changed by this Congress.

VOTE "NO" ON H.R. 4

(Mr. BOUSTANY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I once operated on a Vietnam veteran who then needed lifesaving drugs. But the VA program was going to make him wait for 2 weeks. He had no choice but to pay out of pocket hundreds of dollars. This is completely unacceptable. And we certainly do not want the same thing for our seniors.

I urge my colleagues to support seniors and vote "no" on H.R. 4 because this legislation prevents patients from getting the medication they need. When you scratch the surface, it becomes very clear that this legislation will lead to price controls and rationing. Furthermore, the idea of government negotiation is a joke.

Mr. Speaker, this limits seniors' choices, it's not going to reduce cost, and once again it's the heavy hand of government telling people what is best for them. So I urge my colleagues to support seniors and vote "no" on this legislation.

MIKE SHAMPINE

(Mr. HARE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HARE. Michael Shampine, U.S. Air Force veteran, city councilman, labor union activist, and my good friend and constituent sadly passed away last Saturday.

Mike and I became close friends throughout the past years. His outstanding commitment to labor, his sincere friendship and great sense of humor will be the attributes I will remember the most about him. I do not know anyone who was more committed to his community and his union broth-

ers and sisters than Mike, which was exemplified in the positions he held as president of the Decatur Trades and Labor Assembly and as the business agent/financial secretary of Roofers Local 92.

The community of Decatur has greatly benefited from Mike's exceptional years of service, especially in the ways he successfully brought together labor, business and community leaders to solve the city's problems. His efforts and contributions served as an inspiration to all of us.

To Mike's family and close friends, I extend to you my sincere condolences and hope the pain and loss you feel will become less with each passing day.

God bless you, Mike.

VOTE AGAINST H.R. 4

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my opposition to H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. We could even call it the Big Government Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act. You know, I represent about 70,000 Medicare part D beneficiaries in my district and they deserve low-cost prescription drugs and the option to choose the plans that best suit their needs.

Part D plans have produced greater than expected savings and our Medicare beneficiaries appreciate this. They are saving an average of \$1,200 annually on their drug costs. Program costs are going to be about \$200 billion lower than expected over the next 10 years. And repealing part D noninterference will create drug therapy restrictions found in the Department of Veterans Affairs programs.

There is a lot of talk about the Veterans Affairs and comparing that to Medicare. That is like comparing apples and oranges, because the VA is a direct provider of medical services, where Medicare part D is an insurance program for our seniors that allows them to choose to access and to control their health care.

Vote "no."

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SUPPORT H.R. 4

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007.

Now you can imagine how Democrats felt when the Republicans hijacked the whole idea of putting benefits into Medicare for prescription drugs. Not only did they do a bad job with the regular program with the doughnut hole